

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CONTROLLING A PATIENT'S BODY TEMPERATURE BY IN SITU BLOOD TEMPERATURE MODIFICATION

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The present invention provides a method and apparatus for controlling the internal body temperature of a patient. According to the present invention, a catheter is inserted through an incision into a large blood vessel of a patient. By selectively heating or cooling a portion of the catheter lying within the blood vessel, heat may be transferred to or from blood flowing within the vessel and the patient's body temperature may thereby be increased or decreased as desired. The invention will find use in treating undesirable conditions of hypothermia and hyperthermia, or for inducing a condition of artificial hypothermia when desired. The method and system further provide for the cooling of initially hypothermic patients whose blood or body temperature has been warmed above the desired target level and the warming of initially hyperthermic patients whose blood or body temperature has been cooled below the desired target temperature.